



## Public Health

During the 2020 session, the General Assembly considered bills related to immunizations, food safety, chemical and consumer safety, substance use disorders, and paid sick leave.

### Immunizations

Colorado law requires every child who is attending school in the state to present to a school official an up-to-date certificate of immunization. Prior to the passage of *Senate Bill 20-163*, parents could submit a non-medical exemption to a school official by writing a statement with the students' information, date of exemption, immunizations declined, and type of exemption (personal belief or religious). *Senate Bill 20-163*:

- requires parents to submit a standardized certificate of nonmedical exemption signed by a medical professional or a certificate of completion of an online education module to their child's school. The online education module is administered by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and includes evidence-based scientific data about the benefits and risks of immunizations;
- sets a goal of a 95 percent vaccination rate for every school, and requires schools to actively share their immunization rates with parents;
- requires CDPHE to annually evaluate the state's immunization practices, and allows the State Board of Health to update the state's immunization practices based on their findings; and
- requires health care practitioners to submit immunization and exemption data to the Colorado Immunization Information System.

*House Bill 20-1297* clarified that neither refusing an immunization for a child on the grounds of medical, religious, or personal beliefs nor choosing to exclude the child's information from the state's immunization tracking systems constitutes child abuse or neglect.

*Senate Bill 20-084* would have prohibited an employer, including health care facilities, from requiring employees to be vaccinated or from taking adverse action against an employee based on their immunization status. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

*House Bill 20-1239* would have required health care practitioners and health care facilities to:

- provide certain vaccine information to parents prior to administering a vaccine;
- ensure patients or the patient's parent complete a vaccine contraindication checklist; and
- report vaccine adverse events to the federal vaccine adverse event reporting system.

The bill would have prohibited health care practitioners and health care facilities from recommending or administering a vaccine to a patient who is under 18 years of age without the consent of the patient's parent or guardian. It also would have prohibited health care providers, facilities, insurers, and schools from discriminating against people who delay vaccinations. CDPHE would have been required to post specific vaccine information to its website. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Health and Insurance Committee.

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## Public Health (Cont'd.)

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### Food Safety

*Senate Bill 20-078* allows restaurants to permit pet dogs in their outdoor dining areas as long as certain conditions, such as not allowing them on furniture and requiring them to be on a leash or in a carrier, are met.

Under current law, retail food establishments and nonprofit organizations have limited immunity protection from civil or criminal liability when they donate food to needy individuals. *Senate Bill 20-090* extends the same limited liability to correctional facilities, school districts, hospitals, and farmers who allow persons to gather leftover produce from their property.

### Chemical and Consumer Safety

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are human-made substances used to create products that resist heat, oil, and water. PFAS do not break down in the environment, and ingestion can be harmful to humans and wildlife. *House Bill 20-1119* establishes requirements for receiving an exemption to the restrictions for use of firefighting foam containing PFAS for training purposes, including the exemptions if the testing is conducted at a structure located at a Colorado airport. It requires the Solid and Hazardous Waste Commission to make rules about the use, storage, capture, and disposal of PFAS. The bill also prohibits firefighting foam with PFAS from being stored in certain aircraft hangars.

*House Bill 20-1340* would have required tanning facilities to obtain and keep on file a signed acknowledgment of the risks associated with tanning devices from first time users. The bill would also have prevented tanning facilities from allowing minors under 18 years of age from using artificial tanning devices. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Public Health Care and Human Services Committee.

### Substance Use Disorders

*House Bill 20-1065* includes provisions related to substance use disorder harm reduction. The bill

- requires health insurers to reimburse hospitals for prescribing opiate antagonists to covered individuals;
- creates immunity for individuals, excluding health care providers, who administer an expired antagonist;
- allows pharmacists to sell non-prescribed clean syringes or needles to individuals without a prescription; and
- allows nonprofits or health facilities to operate clean syringe programs without local board of health approval.

### Paid Sick Leave

*Senate Bill 20-205* requires that as of January 1, 2021, employers with 16 or more employees must provide paid sick leave, and starting January 1, 2022, all employers must provide paid sick leave. Sick leave is accrued at a minimum of one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked, to a maximum of 48 hours of sick leave a year. Paid sick leave can be used for the following:

- the employee's own health or health care or that of a member of the employee's family;
- absences related to incidences of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or harassment; or
- when a public official has ordered the closure of the employee's workplace, or the school or child care facility of the employee's child, due to a public health emergency.

The bill also mandates all employers in the state provide paid sick leave to their employees as required in the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic through December 31, 2020, and requires employers to provide additional paid sick leave during a declared public health emergency to its employees.